

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



Column For The Week Of: February 8, 2010

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Allowing Farmers to Have A Blast

Since 2007, the Missouri Blasting Safety Act has been in place to ensure the safe use of explosives in activities important to many of the constituents in our district, including mining and construction.

This law created a “blaster’s license” requirement, which calls for training, testing, and experience before a person could use explosives. However, the law calls for at least 1,000 hours of experience directly related to explosives within two years, plus signed documentation from an employer or supervisor that verifies that experience.

Now, I think this license is a good thing, because it ensures that those who use explosives on a daily basis are trained in the latest safety requirements, laws, and techniques for safe and efficient blasting. There is quite a bit of science and thought in this field, and it is a good thing that those who use explosives on a regular basis are safe and up-to-date.

What I am concerned about is what the law does to our farmers, and that’s why I’ve proposed [SB 795](#). This legislation enacts a blasting license exception for those who use materials to unblock the clogged screens of agricultural wells. This can be done with a small device that is placed deep within the well casing and underwater, so it poses a minimal safety risk.

Most farmers know that a clogged or malfunctioning well can sneak up on you occasionally. Between the well’s age and shifting soil, it doesn’t take much to restrict the flow of water that is fundamental in running day-to-day farming operations. Often times, you won’t know it until you’re out in the field and wondering why the well’s not working or why it’s taking so long to irrigate. Time is money when you’re looking at a dry field, and when you’re talking about a well that’s hundreds of feet deep, controlled demolition is the fastest answer.

There are already exemptions in the Blasting Safety Act for people who use explosives within an industrial furnace or when they are demolishing structures. I don’t think our farmers, who are out safely operating heavy farm equipment every day, need thousands of hours of training to use a simple device to get the lifeline of their farms moving.

Please don’t hesitate to contact my office if you have comments or questions about this week’s column or any other matter involving state government. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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